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ABSTRACT

The Committee on Children's Television (CCT) analyzed the fall program schedules for the five San Francisco Bay Area commercial television stations. They found that 80% of programs directed to children on weekdays are old network and syndicated series, with 10% being contributed by a network; less than 6% of the total children's schedule is devoted to the new network informational programs; 41% of the total children's schedule consists of cartoons; and only 2% of the total schedule for children is produced by local stations. In May, 1971, after a resolution was passed by the Board of Supervisors of San Francisco requesting programming which "adequately reflects the rich diversity of American society," CCT initiated meetings with management representatives of the stations to express concern for better children's programming. While several of the stations have voiced support for the resolution, CCT feels that most of the stations "will do little to upgrade the quantity and quality of children's programming next season." CCT recommends that children be given programs that reflect the cultural diversity of the Bay Area, that treat children as a special class with special human needs, and that are shown at hours appropriate to children. (SH)

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Wasteland Revisited

A Report
on the failure of commercial
television to serve the children
of the Bay Area

prepared by
Committee on Children's Television
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EM 009 193

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THE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN'S TELEVISION has been formed to promote better television programming for children. The Committee grew out of the increasing community awareness that television is an overwhelming influence on the lives of children, and that the potential of the medium is largely untapped and does not reflect sufficient empathy for the needs of children.

CCT AIMS

...to PERSUADE the telvision industry that children represent a substantial viewing audience and are entitled to entertaining programming designed to meet their special needs and interests.

...to PROMOTE good quality, locally produced children's programming that reflects the rich cultural diversity of the San Francisco Bay Area.

...to EXPLORE a new system of finacial support for children's programs by commercial underwriting and public service funding

...to ENCOURAGE more cooperative efforts between all broadcasters serving the area in order that a reasonable amount of programming be made available for children of differing ages daily.

...to ASSURE that the rights of the public to quality programming, as contained in broadcasting laws and regulations, are exercised, and that the rights of children who are unable to petition for themselves are invoked

CCT PROGRAMS

... EVALUATION: social indicators for evaluating the impact of programming and for making recommendations for future programming will be developed.

... ADVOCACY: the findings and positions of the Committee will be publicized and testimony will be presented in all appropriate public forums. When necessary, petitions and fairness complaints will be filed to insure that effective and democratic reform procedures are followed.

... RESOURCE BANK: a compilation of media services, talent sources, and national programming aids will be made available to all interested parties to insure equal access and opportunity to all groups interested in fostering better programming for children.

... SPEAKERS BUREAU: see Advisory Board

CCT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

... ADVISORY BOARD: CCT has brought together a group of concerned parents, professionals and citizens who are representing the interests of children and promoting quality programming by filing formal comments with the FCC, testifying at public hearings, speaking to citizens groups, and appearing on local television and radio programs.

... OFFICIAL RESOLUTION: CCT sponsored a resolution introduced to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors by Supervisor Robert Mendelsohn which the full Board adopted as legislation urging the FCC to upgrade the quality and quanity of children's programs. The Board of Supervisors is the first legislative body in the nation to initiate such action on behalf of its constituency.

... MOBILIZATION OF SUPPORT: The CCT imformed thousands of Bay Area residents that the FCC was soliciting comments for its Fall '71 public inquiry on children's television. The efforts of CCT generated hundreds of letters from individuals, and many formal comments from organizations in support of improving and expanding quality children's programs on television.

... NATIONAL CONTACTS: CCT has a close working relationship with ACT (Action for Children's Television, Inc.), the Boston-based organization which presented the persuasive arguments to the FCC in 1969 that focused national attention on the inadequacies of children's broadcasts and the need to improve programming. As Bay Area Resource Chairman for ACT, Sally Williams has spoken before numerous groups outlining the details of ACT's petition to the FCC (RM 1569-FCC '71) and has made available to the public all ACT materials.

ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING THE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN'S TELEVISION

San Francisco Association for Mental Health: Committee on Children & Youth
San Francisco Unified School District: Advisory Committee on Drug Abuse Education
: Health & Family Life Education Department
San Francisco Council of Parent Participation Nursery Schools, Inc.
San Francisco Bay Area Girl Scout Council
San Francisco Chapter, National Association for Education of Young Children
San Francisco Motion Picture and Television Council
San Francisco Section, National Council of Jewish Women

WHAT YOU CAN DO: JOIN US!

CHILDREN'S TELEVISION FACT SHEET

I. Viewing Habits

The average child. . .

- by age 18 has spent 11,000 hours in classrooms and 15,000 hours watching television.
- watches as much as 50 hours per week or 64% of his waking time.
- watches more television on weekday afternoons than any other time.

II. Commercialism

On Saturday morning television there is an average of one commercial every 2.8 minutes. A full 23% of the time is devoted to non-program material.

By the time the average child reaches the age of 18, he has watched over 350,000 commercial messages.

The industry treats children as consumers. According to an article from Broadcasting Magazine, entitled "Partners for Profit: Children, Toys and TV":

> "The objective of children's programming is to attract the largest possible audience at the lowest possible cost."

III. Violence

On Saturday morning television, there is an incidence of violence in 71% of the stories.

The average child, by age 14 has witnessed 13,000 violent deaths on television.

Preliminary studies commissioned by the Surgeon General indicate a definite link between television violence and aggressive behavior in children.

IV. Bay Area Specifics

80% of the programs directed to children on weekdays by the 5 Bay Area commercial stations are old network and syndicated series, being re-run for the second or third time.

In 1961, the three Bay Area network affiliates had a total of 29.5 hours per week of locally produced programming for children. Now the total has declined to 1.5 hours per week, or 2% of the children's schedule.

A full 41% of the children's schedule is mindless cartoons, over 2/3 of which are re-runs.

CCT September 10, 1971

In 1961, 56% of the programming for children on the 4 Bay Area commercial stations was locally produced. 28% of the programming was network, and 16% was made up of syndicated series. In 1971, even with one additional station, Bay Area commercial television's service to children has made a dismal decline. Local production has all but disappeared, and the airwaves have been flooded with inexpensive syndicated cartoons and re-runs of poor quality network shows. The networks, over a ten year period of rising concern about children's need for quality programming, have increased their children's schedule by less than 4 hours, and maintained a standard of quality far below the capacity of the industry and the needs of children.

An analysis of the fall program schedules for the 5 Bay Area commercial stations based on information available at this time, reveals that:[1/]

1) A full 80% of the programs directed to children on <u>weekdays</u> are old network and syndicated series, being re-run for the second or third time, and only 10% of <u>weekday</u> programming is contributed by a network.

1/ See page 2.

2) Despite the publicity given the new network formats, only 4 hours per week, less than 6% of the total children's schedule, is devoted to their new informational programs.

3) Not only are 5 out of 6 of the new informational programs being shown on Saturday, but two of them (NBC's and ABC's) are being run against each other, further reducing the effective quanity of programming and again demonstrating the detrimental effect of the competitive rating approach.

4) A full 41% of the total children's schedule is mindless cartoons, over 2/3 of which are re-runs. Over 58% of the weekend schedule is cartoons.

5) Only 1½ hours per week, 2% of the total schedule, are produced by local stations.

1/ In this analysis, stations have been given the benefit of the doubt, and all general entertainment programs (i. e.: "Bewitched", "Gilligan's Island", "The Addams Family", etc.) which are shown during children's prime viewing time and feature advertisements directed toward children (toys, cereals, etc.) have been included as a station's service to children.

Note also that general informational programs shown on a regularly scheduled basis (i. e., the National Geographic series on Saturday evening) have also been included as part of children's programming. Full schedules and statistical breakdowns appear in the appendix of this report.

The Committee on Children's Television is an organization of educators, professionals and concerned individuals formed to promote quality programming for the children of the Bay Area. In May of 1971, CCT was instrumental in introducing before the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco, a resolution which asked the Federal Communications Commission to act to upgrade the quantity and quality of television programming for children. The resolution, which was passed unanimously,* specifically mentioned the need for programming "which adequately reflects the rich diversity of American Society." Although KRON-TV and KPIX-TV expressed support for the resolution in private meetings with Supervisors, and the resolution was specifically modified to reflect the stations' suggestions, the stations have taken no action to significantly change their children's programming policies or work with CCT toward better programming.

Since June, members of CCT have initiated meetings with management representatives of the 5 Bay Area commercial stations to express the broad community concern for better children's programming. This

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* See Appendix A, attached, for a copy of the resolution.

report describes the stations' response to CCT, and documents the attitudes and policies behind the stations' failure to serve the children of the Bay Area. The report concludes with CCT's recommendations for ways in which quality programming for children can be achieved.

KGO-TV, channel 7, owned and operated by the American Broadcasting Co.

KGO, although approached regarding the Board of Supervisors resolution, chose to ignore it completely, giving neither support nor news coverage. Editorial Director Herbert Levy told CCT that he felt that the resolution was unimportant and that he did not see how the station's support, or lack of support, would "make any difference."

When CCT met with Mr. Levy in early June, KGO had no locally produced programming for children, and had no definite plans to produce programming in the future. Mr. Levy mentioned that the station had an idea for a program called "Field Trip", but could give no definite date for when the program might be aired. When contacted in late August, however, KGO Program Director Herb Victor told CCT that "Field Trip" would be aired as a weekly, half-hour program starting in September.

Although ABC sponsored a conference on children's television in New York at the end of June, KGO did not send a representative, and

in fact, Mr. Levy was unaware of the conference until CCT asked him for more information about it.

Aside from producing "Field Trip" once each week, KGO's commitment to children consists of nothing more than throwing a switch that opens the network feed from ABC. ABC will offer a total of 7½ hours per week; 5½ on Saturday and 2 on Sunday. Of the 5½ hours planned for Saturday, 2½ hours are old fantasy shows (2 hours of cartoons and ½ hour of "Bewitched"), 1½ hours are new cartoon shows, ½ hour is pop music (American Bandstand), and 1 hour is devoted to a new, informational show, "Curiosity Shop". Of the 2 hours planned for Sunday, ½ hour is for a new program ("Make a Wish"), but this program replaces the much-heralded show "Discovery."2/ KGO offers no weekday programs for children.

KRON-TV, channel 4, NBC affiliate, owned by the Chronicle Broadcasting

Although KRON chose not to make a public statement at the Board of Supervisors' public hearing on children's television, the station gave both support and news coverage to the Supervisors' resolution. CCT expected that this support would be converted into a specific commitment by the station to make its own contribution to "upgrading the quantity and quality of children's programming". The support, however, has proved to be only token.

2/ Analysis of network programming from Warren Braren, Report to ABC Conference, 6/23/71.

Station President Aldo Constant informed CCT that it is the position of KRON that it is the parent, not the broadcaster, who is responsible for making sure that children are not exposed to programming that is unsuitable for them. He also stated that he felt that the station was under no obligation as a social educator to promote moral, ethical, or educational values.

KRON will do little to upgrade the quantity and quality of children's programming next season. The station will be airing one hour-long locally produced program on Sunday morning. In addition, the station has purchased 26 National Geographic specials to be shown on Saturday evenings.

In addition to the above two hours per week, KRON will be carrying 5 hours of network programming from NBC which will be shown on Saturday morning. Of these 5 hours, 2 are devoted to continuation of old cartoon shows from last year, 1 is for a new cartoon show, 1 is for a new informational show, ½ hour is for a new adventure series, and the remaining ½ hour replaces a Peabody Award winning informational show ("Hot Dog") with a revival of another ("Mr. Wizard"). KRON offers no weekday programming for children.

KPIX-TV channel 5, CBS affiliate, owned by Westinghouse Broadcasting Co.

KPIX, like KRON, supported the Board of Supervisors' resolution, but made no public statements at the Board hearings on children's television. Again, despite the lack of a public statement, CCT interpreted the station's support of the resolution as a commitment to contribute to the improvement of children's programming. Again, CCT was disappointed.

After their initial meeting with CCT on June 23, KPIX agreed to run public service announcements informing the public of the FCC inquiry on children's television and announcing the July 2nd deadline for comments. KPIX also told CCT that they had run announcements concerning the FCC Inquiry from a national group, Action for Children's Television, and that they would continue to run them through July 2nd. Later, after having asked for verification that the announements had been aired, CCT was informed by the station that neither the ACT nor the CCT spots had been run. General Manager William Osterhaus said only that the spots had not been aired because of a series of errors made by station personnel.

At 10:00 PM on Tuesday, August 17, KPIX aired a half-hour program, "Feed Them On Your Dreams", which was produced"in cooperation

with" the Committee on Children's Television, and dealt with ways in which television could better serve the needs of children. CCT was pleased to be given the opportunity to express its views, but disappointed that Mr. Osterhaus felt it sppropriate to conclude the program with what was essentially a promotional message for CBS and Group W programming, with an added reminder that it is parents, rather than broadcasters, who are really responsible for seeing that children are not exposed to unsuitable programming.

KPIX has no locally produced programming for children, and CCT was told flatly by Mr. Osterhaus that the station had no interest in producing a program for children in the future. In giving reasons for the station's lack of interest in airing any children's programming on weekday afternoons, he stressed the need for an adult "lead in" to the evening news.

Starting in the fall, KPIX will be airing a weekly, hour long informational program produced by Group W, called "Earth Lab". In addition, the station will carry 11 hours of programming from CBS. 5 of these hours are devoted to "Captain Kangaroo", which remains the only weekday network program for children. The remaining 6 hours will be aired on Saturday. Of these six hours, 2 are devoted

to cartoon shows from last year, 2 are new cartoons, and 2 are devoted to other new shows.

KTVU-TV channel 2, independent, owned by Cox Broadcasting Co.

Although KTVU received a news release regarding the Board hearing on children's television, it chose to give neither coverage nor support.

KTVU does not offer any programming for children that can truely be termed "locally produced". ("Romper Room", although locally originated, is based on a commercially-franchised format with program materials supplied from another location.) General Manager Roger Rice informed CCT that the station does not consider children's television high enough priority to warrent their doing a local production. He cited news and public affairs as the station's top priorities.

KTVU directs 4 hours of programming to children each weekday, of which 1 hour is devoted to "Romper Room", 1 hour is syndicated cartoons, and 2 hours are off-network adventure and comedy re-runs. When asked why 75% of the station's programming for children was

re-runs, Mr. Rice gave the lack of availability of better syndicated programming and the high cost of quality programs as the principal reasons. CCT saw no evidence that the station had made any effort to seek out better quality syndicated programming, and also felt that a station making a profit as considerable as KTVU's could be expected to pay the cost of adequately serving a substantial segment of the public.

KBHK-TV channel 44, independent, owned by Kaiser Broadcasting Co.

KBHK offers the highest quantity, and undoubtedly the lowest quality programming of any station in the Bay Area. This fall the station will carry 5 hours of programming directed at children each weekday, and 3½ hours on Sunday morning. All the programs are either inexpensive syndicated series or off-network re-runs, some of which are run twice a day. "Captain San Francisco," the station's only locally produced program, is being cancelled at the end of the summer and will not be replaced.

When asked about the dismal standard of quality demonstrated in the station's programming, General Manager Carlo Anneke told CCT that, at this time, the station could not afford anything of better quality. CCT feels strongly, however, that the holder of a

broadcast license has a responsibility to maintain a certain standard of public service regardless of his ability to make a profit. In this case, KBHK is not only failing to serve a substantial part of the Bay Area population, but is doing them a disservice. If the station is not prepared to air any decent quality programs for children, it could best benefit the children of the Bay Area by eliminating all current children's programs.

KBHK's weekday afternoon programs are presented in order of increasing sophistication (from cartoons to off-network comedy series, in order to appeal to the increasing age level of children tuning in as they come home from school. CCT find this ironic in view of Kaiser's claim, contained in their formal comment to the FCC Inquiry, that it is unreasonable to require a station to present different programming for specific age groups.

Recommendations

In order for their needs to be adequately served, the children of the Bay Area must be given:

1) programs which reflect the rich cultural and ethnic diversity of the population of the Bay Area.

2) programs which treat children as a special class with special human needs, rather than a group of mini-consumers.

3) programs which are shown at the hours when children are watching most: weekday afternoons from 3:30 to 6:00.

For these reasons, CCT recommends that each of the 5 Bay Area commercial stations begin work, as soon as possible, on entertaining and informational weekday afternoon programs, developed in cooperation with parents and professionals concerned with children (educators, psychologists, psychiatrists) and reflective of the cultural diversity of the Bay Area.

CCT further recommends that the 5 Bay Area stations follow the lead of stations in other parts of the country and:

1) offer at least 14 hours per week of programs directed to 3 specific age groups (pre-school, grade school, and teenagers

2) until non-commercial sources of underwriting and support are developed, cluster commercial messages during children's programming so as to have no interruption of program content.

3) seek out quality syndicated films and programs, from foreign as well as domestic sources.

4) actively seek films and programs of special interest to minority groups.

APPENDIX A

MEMORIALIZING FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION TO UPGRADE QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF CHILDREN'S TELEVISION PROGRAMS.

RESOLUTION NO. 267-71

WHEREAS, There are 230,000 children under thirteen years of age in the City and County of San Francisco who watch television many hours per week; and

WHEREAS, President Nixon observed in a message to Congress on education that today's children have watched an average of 15,000 hours of television by the time they finish high school (compared with 11,000 hours spent in classrooms); and

WHEREAS, Television is a major force in the development of our children and research has shown that, when provided a choice, children will often select to view those programs which, in an interesting format, foster learning, provide motivation, satisfy curiosity, and provide social interchange over those programs which are designed solely to entertain; and

WHEREAS, The three major commercial networks in San Francisco, of a total viewing time of 378 hours per week, only schedule programs for children for 24 hours and over two-thirds of these hours are devoted to weekend cartoons; and

WHEREAS, The right of children to quality programming is both implicit and explicit in commercial broadcasting laws and regulations; and

WHEREAS, By Notice of Inquiry and Notice of Proposed Rule Making adopted January 20, 1971, the Federal Communications Commission invited broadcasters and other interested parties to file comments regarding children's television to be considered at a hearing to be held on July 2, 1971, with reference to this matter; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Board of Supervisors does hereby endorse and applaud the efforts and interest of community groups in improving children's television programming, and the efforts and interest of local television broadcasters in being responsive to the needs and wishes of the community; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That this Board of Supervisors, as part of the Board's overall interest in and responsibility for the welfare and education of the youth of the City and County of San Francisco, does hereby affirm the need for broadcasters to plan their programs to be responsive to the needs and interests of all substantial groups in their listening public, including children, and requests the Federal Communications Commission to take appropriate steps to work with the television industry and the community to improve quantity and quality of children's programming, and to encourage programming which reflects the rich diversity of the American Society.

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco at its meeting of May 10, 1971.

ROBERT J. DOLAN, Clerk

Approved: May 14, 1971

JOSEPH L. ALIOTO, Mayor

May 19, 1971—1t

APPENDIX B

PROGRAMMING DIRECTED TO CHILDREN BY
THE 5 BAY AREA COMMERCIAL STATIONS
(in hours per week)

1971

	local	network	syndicated	total
KPIX	0	11	1	12
KRON	1	5	1	7
KGO	.50	7.50	0	8
KTVU	5*	0	15	20
KBHK	0	0	28.50	28.50
TOTAL	6.50	23.50	45.50	75.50

local: 9% network: 31% syndicated: 60%

* "Romper Room" is counted as locally produced in this breakdown

1961

KPIX	7.50	8.25	2.00	17.75
KRON	8.50	4.50	1.25	14.25
KGO	13.50	7.00	1.50	22.00
KTVU	9.75	0	6.25	16.00
TOTAL	39.25	19.75	11.00	70.00

local: 56% network: 28% syndicated: 16%

Source: TV Guide listings for February 25, 1961

APPENDIX C

BREAKDOWN OF BAY AREA PROGRAMMING BY PROGRAM TYPE
(in hours per week)

1971

	new info.	cartoon	other*	total
KPIX	2	4	6	12
KRON	2.50	3	1.50	7
KGO	2	4	2	8
KTVU	-	5	15	20
KBHK	-	15	13.50	28.50
TOTAL	6.50	31.00	38.00	75.50

informational: 9% cartoon: 41% other: 50%

* aside from "Captain Kangaroo" and "Romper Room", other is made up of adventure and comedy series.

APPENDIX D

CHILDREN'S PROGRAM SCHEDULES OF BAY AREA STATIONS

KGO-TV

Saturday:
7:00 Real Jerry Lewis
7:30 Road Runner
8:00 Funky Phantom
8:30 Jackson 5
9:00 Bewitched
9:30 Lidsville
10:00 Curiosity Shop
11:00 Johnny Quest
11:30 Lancelot Link
12:00 American Bandstand

Sunday:
9:30 Field Trip (local)
10:00 Reluctant Dragon
10:30 Double Deckers
11:00 Bullwinkle
11:30 Make A Wish

KRON-TV

Saturday:
7:00 Doctor Dolittle
7:30 Woody Woodpecker
8:00 Deputy Dawg
8:30 Pink Panther
9:00 Barrier Reef
9:30 Take A Giant Step
10:30 Boogaloos
11:00 Mr. Wizard
11:30 Jetsons

7:00 PM National Geographic Specials

Sunday:
8:00 Getboxtickle (local)

KPIX-TV

Monday through Friday:
8:00 Captain Kangaroo

Saturday:
7:00 Josie and Pussycats
7:26 In The News
7:30 The Monkees

KPIX continued:

7:56 In The News
8:00 Bugs Bunny
8:30 Scooby Doo
8:56 In The News
9:00 Harlem Globetrotters
9:26 In The News
9:30 Here Come The Bears
9:56 In The News
10:00 Pebbles and Bam Bam
10:26 In The News
10:30 Archie's TV Funnies
10:56 In The News
11:00 Sabrina
11:26 In The News
11:30 Earth Lab
12:30 You Are There
1:00 Children's Film Festival

KTVU-TV

Monday Through Friday:
8:00 Popeye
8:30 Romper Room

3:30 Cartoon Town
4:00 Lost in Space
5:00 Please Don't Eat The Dasies
5:30 Gilligan's Island

KBHK-TV

Monday Through Friday:
12:00 Banana Splits
12:30 Marine Boy

3:00 Kimba
3:30 Banana Splits
4:00 Speed Racer
4:30 Popeye
5:00 Three Stooges
5:30 The Addams Family
6:00 The Flintstones
6:00 The Munsters

Sunday:
8:00 Yogi Bear
8:30 Kimba
9:00 Banana Splits
9:30 Speed Racer
10:00 Popeye
10:30 Three Stooges
11:00 The Flintstones